

DR. STIRLING MCDOWELL
Foundation
FOR
RESEARCH INTO TEACHING



**TEACHING AND LEARNING
RESEARCH EXCHANGE**

It's O.K. to Have
This Book In Your
Public School
Library!

Kim Tadei

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- 2) encourage educational inquiry through a wide range of methodologies;
- 3) support the involvement of practising teachers in active research projects;
- 4) encourage organizations as well as individuals to determine and act in areas of research and inquiry; and
- 5) encourage experimentation with innovative ideas and methodologies related to teaching and learning.

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Executive Summary

Sexual orientation is a very controversial topic in Saskatchewan. Many teachers, administrators and school boards are reluctant to discuss any issue dealing with homosexuality. When it comes to buying books, videos and resource materials for school libraries, we are afraid of suffering repercussions from our actions.

This project was undertaken to provide teachers and, more specifically, teacher-librarians in Saskatchewan with a document that would support them in placing books with a gay/lesbian theme in their public school libraries.

First, this report documents that the importance of support for equity in our schools was acknowledged by the partners in education in our province: Saskatchewan Learning, Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, and the League of Educational Administrators, Directors of Education and Superintendents. Each organization was very clear in stating that your local school board must have in place a policy regarding the placement of books or curriculum materials in your school library. Each organization cites the policy framework document, *Our Children, Our Communities, Our Future*, which outlines the partners' commitment to promoting equity. If you are a teacher-librarian, it would therefore behoove you to discuss with your principal and your superintendent, your school board's policy on curriculum and instruction materials.

Teacher-librarians should also be aware that the Supreme Court of Canada will hear the case of Chamberlain et al versus the Board of Trustees of School District #36 (Surrey, B.C.) on June 12, 2002. We are hopeful that the Court will rule in favor of placing books of a gay/lesbian theme in schools.

The second focus of support for teacher-librarians was to provide an annotated bibliography of books with a gay/lesbian theme that can be purchased in Saskatchewan. The annotated bibliography gives a brief description of each book's content as well as the pertinent information required to order it for a school library. The title, author, publisher, copyright date and ISBN number have been supplied. In addition, a target audience for each book is given, as well as the section of the library in which the book may be placed.

It is hoped that this research provides Saskatchewan's administrators, teacher-librarians and teachers with some insights and an understanding that "It's O.K. to Have This Book In Your Public School Library".

Dedication

This research project is dedicated to all the gay and lesbian students, parents, and teachers in our schools. It is hoped that this report will give teacher-librarians the courage to put books on a gay/lesbian theme on their library shelves. If my research can break the silence in one person's life – it will have been worth all the effort.

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Foreword

At the McDowell Foundation's Learning from Practice Exchange of Teacher Knowledge and Research in November 2000, Dr. Angela Ward was invited to bring closing remarks to the conference. Dr. Ward eloquently reviewed the projects showcased at the conference, and she noted that no one had ever researched gay and lesbian issues. Her remark struck a chord in me as I realized that, as a teacher-librarian for the past fourteen years, I had never put a book in my school libraries dealing with gay/lesbian topics!

On the drive home, I reflected on my practices – why would I not put a book in our school libraries? I was scared! I was scared to face those parents who would demand the removal of the books. I believed that many teachers are afraid to confront these issues.

I decided that I would develop a document for teachers and teacher-librarians showing them that the Supreme Court of British Columbia supports gay and lesbian materials in public school libraries. As I began to think more about this issue, I thought I should go even further to seek statements of support from the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, the Saskatchewan School Libraries Association, the Saskatchewan Department of Learning, and even my own school division.

When I wrote up my application for a research grant from the Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation, it occurred to me that teacher-librarians would appreciate an annotated bibliography of appropriate books, and that teachers would appreciate a brief description of the books. So I started on my adventure – trying to find support and books for dealing with gay and lesbian topics!

Support

ORGANIZATIONAL POSITIONS

In order for teacher-librarians to feel supported in placing books with a gay and lesbian theme in their libraries, they need to know the positions of key educational organizations on this issue. Several organizations were contacted to acquire their policies related to diversity. Saskatchewan Learning, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF), League of Educational Administrators, Directors of Education and Superintendents (LEADS), Saskatchewan School Trustees Association (SSTA), and Saskatchewan Rivers School Division (my employing school division) sent replies.

Saskatchewan Learning promotes equity in Saskatchewan schools through various policy, curriculum and program initiatives. The goal is to ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate fully in the educational experience.

The Department has been working in conjunction with other organizations through the Equity in Education Forum to promote equity in the school system. Represented on this committee are Saskatchewan Learning, the SSTA, the STF, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina, the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan, and LEADS.

In 1997, the Equity Forum prepared a policy document entitled *Our Children, Our Communities, and Our Future: Equity in Education* that outlines the commitment of the participating organizations in promoting equity. In March, 2001, the Equity Forum also prepared an implementation handbook entitled *Planning for Action* to help school administrators implement the policy. These two documents may be found on Saskatchewan Learning's website: www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/k/pecs/h/pp/publications.html

LEADS supports and has formally endorsed the document *Equity in Education: Our Children, Our Communities and Our Future*. A LEADS member sits on the Equity in Education Committee that exists to continue to address the whole area of equity.

As a key member of the Equity Forum, the SSTA has also formally endorsed the policies of the Forum and remains concerned about all equity issues. It reminds us that the responsibility and authority for approving resource center collections rests with boards of education. It is the board's responsibility in law to approve the selection of resource materials and to have a policy in place that facilitates hearing complaints made by any person about the inclusion or exclusion of any materials from resource center collections.

It is the view of the SSTA that librarians and others who may have the administrative responsibility for learning resource selection in public schools are bound by the policies of their boards of education. The means to amend board policy lies within each school division, and necessary amendments should be undertaken prior to the selection and purchase of any materials that do not fall within the limits set by the policy.

Saskatchewan Rivers School Division #119 has adopted Policy 7001 Program Priorities, which states that the Board of Education believes in providing a quality program of studies for all students for which it has responsibility. The Board of Education will endeavor to implement and support programming directions that:

1. Promote high expectations in educational programming;
2. Encourage the growth and development of responsibility and citizenship; and
3. Emphasize a positive self-concept and genuine feelings of self-worth among students.

The division's quality program of studies will strive to include a broad range of resource materials for the use of staff and students, and provisions for meeting the individual needs of students as an important element of the teaching and learning process in all schools.

Readers of this report may have noticed that throughout this document, the reference is to "public" school libraries. Originally this project was oriented towards all libraries in publicly funded schools. However, as the research progressed and interviews with "separate" school teacher-librarians occurred, it became clear that most Catholic school divisions would not support the placement of books with gay/lesbian themes in their elementary schools. The high school libraries would probably be allowed to have non-fiction material on homosexuality. It would be advisable for teacher-librarians in Catholic schools to discuss this issue with their principals and their superintendents or directors before placing any gay/lesbian books in their school libraries.

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation's statement of support for the inclusion in school libraries of resources dealing with gay and lesbian themes emphasizes a teacher's professional commitment and responsibility to students. In 1999, the teaching profession in Saskatchewan adopted policies that formally recognized teachers' obligation to work actively against any form of discrimination against students or teachers on the basis of their sexual orientation. As part of their professional commitment to the goals of public education, teachers are committed to promoting equity in schools and society as well as developing the character and life opportunities of every child and youth. In effect, teachers are professionally committed to support and value gay and lesbian students and teachers and to encourage others to celebrate them as part of the rich human diversity to be found in our society. Teachers are called on to assume a leadership role in the achievement of equity for gays and lesbians within and through education.

An important measure for moving towards the celebration of diversity in our classrooms and our schools is the provision of instructional materials that provide balanced perspectives on gays and lesbians and avoid the perpetuation of bias and misunderstanding. Teachers are responsible for the selection of instructional materials for use in our schools. To meet the goals of public education, they are expected to select materials that will encourage dialogue between groups within our society, develop critical and creative thinking in students, and model an appreciation of diversity. The right to intellectual freedom in Canada lays the foundation for teachers to exercise their professional responsibility to select instructional materials that meet these educational objectives and deal equitably with groups such as gays and lesbians.

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation supports its members in carrying out their professional responsibilities and, more specifically, supports those teacher-librarians who make a professional choice to place materials in school libraries that include gay and lesbian themes. Recognizing that such choices may be controversial, however, the Federation suggests that policies and procedures should be in place within each school and school division to support teacher-librarians in their choices. It also suggests that, wherever possible, teacher-librarians should develop opportunities for differing views about gay and lesbian materials to be exchanged and explored as part of the process of selecting these materials for the school library.

The Executive and Administrative Staff of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation have developed a strategic plan, which makes reference to planning statements and policies regarding school resources that deal with sexual orientation. In this plan, it is a foundational function of the Federation to engage in social and political advocacy. Strategic directions involved in this function in 2001 require the Federation to:

- Develop and practice respectful and constructive norms of interaction within the membership, and with education partners and the public;
- Model values and practices that are consistent with the democratic ideals of citizenship and social justice through advocacy for public education; and
- Take actions to influence public opinion, political parties, and advocacy groups on matters of educational and professional significance.

More specifically, the Federation is committed to strengthening its "equity in education" and "equity through education" initiatives, and developing resources and opportunities for its members to articulate beliefs and model norms of interaction that are consistent with democratic ideals and social justice principles. Among the materials that the Federation proposes to develop are a resource for schools on sexual orientation and a resource called "Diversity in the Staffroom".

RELEVANT POLICIES OF THE SASKATCHEWAN TEACHERS' FEDERATION

3.1 Goals of Public Funded Education

3.1.2 Beliefs

(1) General

- a. Publicly funded education is intended to meet the educational needs of all children in a society.
- b. Publicly funded education must recognize and respect diversity among students, staff and communities, and must be committed to promoting equity within schools and society.
- c. Publicly funded education must shape and enrich the character and life opportunities of each student.
- d. The STF supports the curriculum related Goals of Education for Saskatchewan (1984), as established by the Department of Education through a public consultation process. These goals affirm a student centered, broadly based understanding of education which will prepare students to become knowledgeable, caring and responsible citizens.

5.3.5 Intellectual Freedom

(1) Definition

- a. Intellectual Freedom is generally defined as the right of access to all forms of expression of creativity and knowledge.
- b. Intellectual Freedom is a right that is manifest in the Canadian Bill of Rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which ensure that all Canadians have the right to express ideas and to have access to the ideas of others.

(2) Beliefs

- a. Canada is a democratic, pluralistic and tolerant society. A cornerstone of such a society is intellectual freedom.
 - i. Our education system bears a major responsibility for educating future citizens who can function effectively in such a democratic and pluralistic society.
 - ii. All educational agencies should develop policies that support intellectual freedom.
- b. Teachers are committed to the pursuit and perpetuation of knowledge and the development of creative and critical thinking among students.

- i. *Teachers must have the freedom to exercise their professional prerogative of selecting instructional materials for students in a way that ensures the students' legislated right to intellectual freedom while meeting sound educational objectives.*
- ii. *Teachers must feel secure in their professional capacity knowing they have the support of their professional organization and employing school.*
- c. *Teachers have the responsibility to select and use a wide range of instructional materials that presents different points of view and offers a diversified approach to understanding the world.*
- d. *Opportunity should be provided for other groups (students, parents, and community) to have their views concerning instructional materials considered; however, the major responsibility for selecting instructional materials lies with the professional teaching staff.*

(3) *Policy Considerations*

- a. *In order to support teachers and teacher-librarians in fulfilling their responsibility to select learning materials, school boards are encouraged to develop policies that include:*
 - i. *Selection Criteria: Guidelines and/or policies for selecting learning materials need to be established clearly at least at the individual school level, and preferably at the school division level.*
 - ii. *Procedures for Selection: Professional school staff (teachers, administrators, and resource personnel) need to evaluate each selection in light of the established selection criteria.*
 - iii. *Ways to Enlist Community Support: Adequately informing the community outside the school about the school system's educational philosophy, its goals, and its policies and procedures will make parents and other members of the public aware of how and why selection decisions are made.*
 - iv. *Procedures for Dealing with Challenges: Even after the utmost care has been taken to establish selection criteria, review materials and inform the public, there still needs to be a clearly defined process for dealing with objections to materials.*
 - v. *The Department of Education, with its leadership role in developing curricula and learning resources, should establish guidelines and policies for the development of learning materials and instructional approaches that support the principle of intellectual freedom.*

(1990)

6.8 Discrimination and Education

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation recognizes and deplores the existence of discrimination which limits human potential. In opposing and redressing discrimination against individuals or groups on the basis of factors such as ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation, family status, marital status, disability, nationality, or receipt of public assistance, it is recognized that specific positive actions may be required to assist individuals and groups to achieve their potential. Further, it is recognized that programs should be developed to support and guide teachers and their organization in working toward the elimination of discrimination and toward a better understanding of human differences.

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation believes in the following principles:

- 6.8.1 Teachers should strive for a society in which all people may participate with equal access to opportunity, education, and responsible choice.*
- 6.8.2 Teachers, because of their influential position in the development of children's attitudes, should assume a leadership role in the opposition of discrimination.*

Further, the Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation believes the following propositions will support these principles:

6.8.3 School Programs

- (1) Teachers should support equality in their work places by seeking to eliminate discrimination and bias that may exist in:
 - a. the delegation of responsibilities within the school*
 - b. school programs and offerings*
 - c. curricula*
 - d. instructional materials*
 - e. extra-curricular activities or*
 - f. other areas in which discrimination is reinforced or perpetuated.**
- (2) To encourage the development of the individual child's self-concept and eventual choice of a responsible role in society, teachers should integrate into the existing curricula where appropriate:
 - a. content and analysis relating to stereotyping and discrimination*
 - b. materials to supplement or replace that which is biased.**
- (3) Those responsible for curriculum development and revision should strive to incorporate into any new curricula the concepts stated in clause (2).*

(1978, amended 1979 and 1999)

THE LAW

On April 24, 1997 the Surrey School Board passed a resolution banning three books for use as learning resources for kindergarten and grade one students. The three books depicted children with same-sex parents. The Supreme Court of British Columbia was petitioned by James Chamberlain, Murray Warren, Diane Willcott, Blaine Cook by his guardian ad litem, Sue Cook and Rosamund Elwin to order this resolution quashed and approve the books for use.

Madam Justice Mary Saunders ruled that the Surrey School Board must reconsider these three books for use in kindergarten and grade one. She said that these books do not raise the issues of sexuality and sexual practices. She noted that “there is direct evidence that *One Dad*, *Two Dads* and *Asha’s Mums* have been used in the classroom elsewhere in British Columbia, and *One Dad*, *Two Dads* in the state of Washington without ill effect.”

The Supreme Court of Canada has announced that on June 12, 2002, it will hear the appeal put forward by James Chamberlain et al versus the Board of Trustees of School District #36, Surrey, B.C. A decision should be rendered within six months of the hearing.

The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code c.S-24.1 Right to Education 13 (1) states:

Every person and every class of persons shall enjoy the right to education in any school, college, university or other institution or place of learning, vocational training or apprenticeship without discrimination because of his or their race, creed, religion, colour, sex, sexual orientation, family status, marital status, disability, nationality, ancestry, place of origin or receipt of public assistance.

OUR CHILDREN, OUR COMMUNITIES AND OUR FUTURE – EQUITY IN EDUCATION: A POLICY FRAMEWORK

This document has been endorsed by all of the Partners in Education: Saskatchewan Learning, Human Rights Commission, LEADS, SSTA and STF. Each organization will refer to this document when faced with the issue of gay/lesbian themes in resource center materials for public school libraries.

In the opening message, the document states:

Saskatchewan's diverse population is reflected across the education system among our students and their families, educators, administrators, and board members. Ensuring that each person has equitable opportunity and benefit, regardless of ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, religious preference, culture, gender, family structure and lifestyle, social or economic background or other difference, is a critical priority. Excellence within Saskatchewan's education system will only be achieved when education equity is a reality.

Our Children, Our Communities and Our Future: Equity in Education puts forward our unified and strengthened commitment to education equity and the achievement of concrete results. This shared effort reflects the importance of the task and also the critical need to work together to achieve success. This policy framework provides a road map to guide us on a journey of change that aims at capturing the minds and hearts of each one of us on a personal level, as well as the focused commitment of our organizations.

We believe that education has the ability to empower each person and to create the conditions for full and equal participation, opportunity and benefit in society. In making the challenge of education equity a shared priority, the education system is strengthening its commitment to the development and well-being of all children and youth, and making a vital contribution to the well-being and prosperity of all the province's people and communities.

In the Introduction on pages two and three, the principle of equity is defined and six objectives are put forward:

A commitment to the principle of equity means working to ensure that each person is able to reach his or her full potential and to make a positive contribution to the community. In essence, this goal focusses on the questions:

- *How do I want to be treated?*
- *How do I want my children to be treated?*
- *What do I want for my children?*
- *What do we want for our children?*

The principle of equity is fundamental to the concept of public education and to a publicly funded school system. Saskatchewan's education system has a leadership role to play in ensuring equity within its schools and across the province. Public education has the capacity to enlighten and empower and is the key institution in our society that nurtures understanding and harmonious communities.

Their objectives are:

- 1. foster commitment to a **shared vision and policy** for equity throughout Saskatchewan's education system. This includes agreement on what equity means at the individual, organizational and provincial levels;*
- 2. develop and implement an inclusive, collaborative and community-based **process** for change that is valued, sustainable in the long-term and focuses on personal and organizational commitment. This includes engaging people at a personal level about their values and aspirations for children and community;*
- 3. define, secure and focus **resources** to support actions toward equity, building on existing foundations, structures and events. This includes developing supports and resources for educators, boards, students and community members;*
- 4. nurture **leadership** at the local and organizational levels, identifying and supporting local champions, and building the capacity for continuing commitment and action. This includes facilitating dialogue and expanding ownership and responsibility to parents, community groups and others;*
- 5. develop **indicators of success** to monitor progress, including assessing the gaps between policy and actions and between actions and outcomes. This includes communicating successes and results; and,*
- 6. sustain **commitment to equity** at all levels of the education system and among all people within the education system. This includes making a conscious effort to focus on and integrate equity principles and strategies into every policy, program and action undertaken.*

The partners in education have stated, through the principle of equity and the objectives they have established, that teacher-librarians in public schools can be supported in showing their leadership and commitment to equity in their programming and in securing resources that focus on gay/lesbian issues.

This document provides a policy framework, an action plan, and a commitment to an outline of shared roles and responsibilities for each of the partners of education. It also provides us with a definition of equity for education in Saskatchewan: **Equity in education, is the fair and equal treatment of all members of our society who are entitled to participate in and enjoy the benefits of an education. All students and adults have the opportunity to participate fully and to experience success and human dignity while developing the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to contribute meaningfully to society.**

In the document's glossary of terms, equity is defined as follows: **Equity – equality of opportunity, access, and outcome; equity is characterized by the**

fair and respectful treatment of all people, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, lifestyle, sexual orientation, creed, and so on. Equity hinges on equal rights, equal opportunities and equal results.

Our Children, Our Communities and Our Future can be an invaluable tool if you, as a teacher-librarian, want to put gay/lesbian resources in your public school library. Find out if your school division supports this document. If it does, then begin the journey of change in your school division. The teacher-librarian group can embark on this journey of change, and your local association of the STF can support your efforts. Always keep in mind the question: "What do we want for our children?"

SUMMING UP

As my research has defined the situation, teacher-librarians are advised to investigate their boards' policies on resource center materials. If your school division does not have such a policy, your teacher-librarian group could lobby the school division to create an inclusive resource materials policy citing *Our Children, Our Communities and Our Future – Equity in Education: A Policy Framework*. This document is endorsed by Saskatchewan Learning, SSTA, STF, LEADS, and the Human Rights Commission.

The STF is committed to supporting its members and can provide tremendous support to teacher-librarians who may be confronted or challenged by colleagues, administrators, board members, or parents, for having the courage to put resource materials on a gay or lesbian theme in their public school libraries.

Why Should I Embark On This Journey?

It is time to **Break the Silence** for our gay and lesbian students, parents and teachers in Saskatchewan. Research shows that up to 10 per cent of the population identifies itself as gay or lesbian. So, in your school, you will have students who are gay or lesbian, students with brothers or sisters who are gay or lesbian, students with parents who are gay or lesbian, students with friends who are gay or lesbian and students with teachers who are gay or lesbian. The frightening thing is – you won't know who they are because of their fear!

For many children in our schools, it is not safe for them to express who they are or who their parents are! University students who attended the STF Conference, Honoring Diversity in the Classroom, stated in 1999, "If we only had some books in our school library to read about gay and lesbian topics, we would have felt accepted." They also said, "If we could have known which teachers were in support of gays and lesbians, we would have felt safer."

Dianne Oberg is a noted Canadian teacher-librarian who works at the University of Alberta as an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education. She has a joint appointment with the School of Library and Information Studies. Dianne Oberg, in her article for *Teacher-Librarian Today* (Vol. 6. No. 1, 2000) entitled "Safe and Caring Schools for Gay and Lesbian Youth", has stated that gay and lesbian youth are at risk in our society and in our schools. They face homophobic attitudes in their homes, in the media and in the classrooms, and they lack positive role models and the affirmation of a same-sex sexual orientation. As a result, it is not surprising that gay and lesbian youth are two to three times more likely than heterosexual classmates to drop out of school, to run away from home, to abuse drugs and alcohol and to attempt to commit suicide. Gay and lesbian students often live in fear of violence; their fears are justified. Many are ridiculed and harassed. Few go to school authorities for help; few get help when they ask for help. At least 30 per cent of adolescents who kill themselves are homosexual.

Dianne also says, that we can contribute to making schools safe and caring for gay and lesbian youth by:

- ensuring that our school libraries have the best possible collections of informational books on human sexuality, to support the health curriculum and to provide the vital information students want and need about sexuality and sexual orientation;
- checking our current collections of materials on human sexuality and weeding out those with homophobic content and attitudes; and
- ensuring that our school libraries have the best possible selection of novels, short stories and magazines for youth and that some of these are affirming of same-sex orientations.

Teacher-librarians can make a difference to a student who is dealing with gay and lesbian issues. By having resources available to your students in your public school library, you may save a life, physically or emotionally. Your students who are living with gay or lesbian parents will see that you accept their family members for who they are. Your students who are struggling with their sexual identity will be able to read books that help them to understand the meaning of sexual orientation. Your students who are gay or lesbian will be able to read novels depicting gay and lesbian characters in a positive light. And you, as a teacher-librarian, will have “Broken the Silence” for gay and lesbian students in your school.

SUMMARY

The seed for this project was germinated on the drive home from the Learning from Practice Exchange in November, 2000. It was planted by Dr. Angela Ward, who currently works for the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan. After an hour and a half of personal reflection, I concluded that many teacher-librarians in our schools were afraid to purchase books with a gay/lesbian theme because they were unsure of the repercussions their action would have.

It's O.K. To Have This Book In Your Public School Library! was intended to provide administrators, teacher-librarians and teachers with a document that informs them about the legalities of placing books with a gay/lesbian theme in school libraries. The major stakeholders in education were contacted by letter to determine their position on the placement of books on a gay/lesbian theme in public school libraries.

Saskatchewan Learning promotes equity in Saskatchewan schools. The Equity in Education Forum was established with representation from Saskatchewan Learning, the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina, the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan, and the League of Educational Administrators, Directors of Education and Superintendents. The Equity Forum prepared a policy framework in 1997 entitled *Our Children, Our Communities, Our Future*, which illustrates the commitment the stakeholders have towards equity. It is important for all teacher-librarians to contact their superintendents or directors to determine if their school boards have the same commitment to equity and if a policy is in place regarding the placement of these books in their public school libraries.

The Supreme Court of Canada convenes June 12, 2002 to decide the case of Chamberlain et al versus the Board of Trustees of School District #36 (Surrey, B.C.). This case was tried in Vancouver in 1998. It involved a teacher requesting an approval for the use of three books in his kindergarten-grade one classroom. The three books depicted children with same-sex parents. The Surrey School Board denied the use of the books. This denial led to a year-long battle, ending with the appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. The ruling of the Supreme Court Justices is awaited with great anticipation.

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation supports teacher-librarians in carrying out their professional responsibilities and its members who make a professional choice to place, in school libraries, materials that include gay and lesbian themes. The STF is committed to equity through education, and it is currently developing resources and professional development opportunities for its members that deal with sexual orientation.

Dianne Oberg, noted Canadian teacher-librarian from the University of Alberta, has stated that gay and lesbian youth are at risk in our schools. They are at risk of dropping out of school, running away from home, abusing drugs and alcohol, and attempting to commit suicide. Teacher-librarians who ensure that their collections include informational books on human sexuality, novels, short stories and magazines are affirming same-sex orientation, which contributes to making their schools safe and caring.

The annotated bibliography was created from books that can be purchased in Saskatchewan. At times the development of the bibliography was a daunting task. Many books were out of print; those from the United States were far too expensive for limited school budgets; and many titles could not be found. As a result, the bibliography should be considered a work in progress. As more resources are found, this report will need to be updated. Bibliographies and annotated bibliographies are found on numerous websites and linkages to other suitable sites. There are several worthwhile sites in Canadian education, especially in Ontario and British Columbia.

Finding resources for younger children was particularly difficult. There were a lot of novels available for youth. The video resources from the National Film Board of Canada are excellent. Its list of works on a gay/lesbian theme would be a great start to your public school library collection. The World Wide Web is a great resource for annotated bibliographies, but keep in mind that it may be difficult for you to find a Canadian distributor of the book.

For a teacher-librarian to embark on this journey of equity in their school, it will take courage and perhaps persistence. You will need to discuss the issues of equity with your school's administration, your division's superintendent or director, and even your colleagues on staff. It is never easy to broach the subject of gays and lesbians. However, many school divisions in Saskatchewan are realizing the need to talk about this very controversial issue. They are realizing that they have students whose parents are the same gender. They are realizing that junior high and high school students are struggling with their sexual identities. They are realizing that they do have teachers working for them who are gay or lesbian. Many school divisions in Saskatchewan are "Breaking the Silence" by supporting the sexual orientation of the people in their schools and the students, parents and staff members are feeling the empowerment of these supportive actions.

Good luck with your journey.

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This resource manual can provide teachers and their school staffs with a tremendous opportunity to engage in a valuable professional development experience. It promotes breaking the silence on homosexuality. This manual challenges us as teachers to develop our own anti-homophobia strategies for our classrooms.

Audience: Teachers and Administrators. Professional. ISBN 0-920659-10-1.

Bain, Dr. Jerald.(2000). *So Your Child Is Gay – A Guide for Canadian Families and Their Friends*. Toronto: Harper Collins Canada.

Dr. Bain has written a wonderful book for parents, friends and teachers of gay and lesbian students. It is an honest, encouraging and most informative sharing of his feelings, thoughts and prejudices about gays and lesbians. He encourages self-empowerment. Dr. Bain uses personal stories, suggestions and resources for parents who find out that their child is gay. He discusses common myths and misconceptions, and even religious attitudes.

Audience: Grade 10 - Grade 12. Non-Fiction. ISBN 0-00-638492-7

Bauer, Marion Dane. (1994). *Am I blue? Coming out from the silence*. New York: Harper Collins Children's Books.

This is an anthology of writings by sixteen authors, all of whom are well known in children's literature, who have successfully dealt with very controversial gay and lesbian themes. The collection of short stories written by Bruce Coville, Lois Lowry, Jane Yolen and C.S. Adler (to mention a few) has utilized gay and lesbian characters in a very positive light. The feelings of the characters give the reader a sensitive picture of what it is like living in a gay world.

Audience: Grade 10 - Grade 12. Fiction – short stories. ISBN 0-06-440587-7

Cameron, Elspeth. (1997). *No Previous Experience – A Memoir of Love and Change*. Toronto. Penguin Books Canada Ltd.

Elspeth Cameron is one of Canada's most respected biographers. She has won numerous Canadian Book Awards, and when she writes her own memoir, we have been given a very special gift. She writes of her failed marriages, her drive in the working world, the sexual harassment in her life, and the wonderful friendship she experiences that results in the re-evaluation of herself. This is a beautiful lesbian love story.

Audience: Grade 11 - Grade 12. Autobiography. ISBN 0-670-87376-4.

Carver, Peter. (1995). *Notes Across the Aisle*. Saskatoon: Thistle-down Press.

Karin Galldin has written a short non-fiction essay that reveals Anne's feelings and emotions for Claire during high school. Here are two young poets who spend countless hours together, with Claire finally expressing her love for Anne.

Audience: Grade 10 - Grade 12. Non-Fiction essay. ISBN 1-895449-45-6.

Elwin, Rosamund and Paulese, Michele. (1990). *Asha's Mums*. Toronto: Women's Press.

This is a thought-provoking story of a young girl who needs a permission slip signed by her parents in order to go on the class field trip to the Science Center. When the form comes back signed by two mums, the teacher will not accept it because it has not been filled out correctly! This leads to a lively discussion in the class the next day. The entire class learns far more than what the Science Center has to teach.

Audience: Grade 1 - Grade 5. Easy. ISBN 0-88961-143-2.

Fox, Paula. (1995). *The Eagle Kite*. New York: Orchard Books New York.

Liam is a fourteen year old who is deeply embroiled in lies. He hates himself for lying to his best friends, Luther and Delia. He is telling his friends his dad has cancer. Liam's dad has AIDS. Liam has lied to his mother about dad's partner, Geoff. The lies are starting to eat him up, just as the disease is swallowing up his dad.

Audience: Grade 7 - Grade 8. Fiction. ISBN 0-531-08742-5.

Garden, Nancy. (1982). *Annie On My Mind*. Canada: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd.

This is an intimate story of the love between Liza and Annie. Both girls are loners and they strike up a friendship after meeting, quite by chance. After several months their friendship leads to a mutual attraction and that first kiss. As their relationship grows stronger and they fall in love, the unthinkable happens! The surprising ending leaves us all with a valuable and wonderful lesson: "the truth shall set us free".

Audience: Grade 12. Fiction. ISBN 0-374-40414-3.

Gordon, Sol Ph.D. (2000). *All Families Are Different*. Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books.

Dr. Gordon does a wonderful job of depicting the many facets of a family. He deals with being an orphan, a foster child, and adopted, and living in families with mixed religions, cultures and races, families of divorce, and families with same-gender parents. He repeatedly expresses the message that families love each other, work together to create a happy home, and work out problems they have together. He provides the children with many suggestions of how to deal with teasing, sadness, loneliness, and the need to be yourself. Vivien Cohen's

illustrations are filled with emotion. They make you laugh, cry, think, and love this book.

Audience: Grade 2 - Grade 5. Easy. ISBN 1-57392-765-1.

Marcus, Eric. (2000). *What If Someone I Know Is Gay? Answers to Questions About Gay and Lesbian People*. New York: Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers.

Eric Marcus has put together a book to answer everyone's questions. His explanations are well written and teen-age readers would have no difficulty reading this book. The chapter titles include "What is Gay?", "Friends and Family", "Dating", "Sex", "God and Religion", "School", "Discrimination" and "Resources". Eric speaks honestly and sensitively when answering the questions put to him. The resources and web sites listed are American but can still be used in Canada.

Audience: Grade 10 - Grade 12. Non-Fiction. ISBN 0-8431-7611-3

Newman, Lesléa. (1995). *Too Far Away to Touch*. New York: Clarion Books.

This is a lovely story of the relationship of a young girl, Zoe, and her uncle, Leonard. When he comes to visit they love to go to the Bronx Zoo, the Museum of Modern Art or the Hayden Planetarium. When she learns that Uncle Leonard is sick with AIDS, she asks many questions about dying, and they have beautiful discussions about death.

Audience: Grade 2 - Grade 5. Easy. ISBN 0-395-68968-6

Newman, Lesléa. (1993). *Saturday is Pattyday*. Toronto: Women's Press.

What an interesting story! Frankie's two moms, Allie and Patty, have divorced, and now Frankie has to live between two homes. Frankie experiences the same questions and feels the same emotions rushing through her as any child of a divorced straight couple.

Audience: Grade 1- Grade 5. Easy. ISBN 0-88961-181-5.

Newman, Lesléa. (1989). *Heather Has Two Mommies*. Los Angeles: Alyson Publications Inc.

This book starts out with Jane being artificially inseminated, so it would not be suitable for your Easy section. However, it could be a valuable resource in your Professional section since the second half of the book is about a young girl, Heather, attending pre-school. A class discussion of their families takes place while reading a story, and pretty soon all the children are describing their unique families. They learn that a family is special and everyone loves each other.

Audience: Parents, Teachers. Professional. ISBN 1-55583-180-X.

Rench, Janice E. (1990). *Understanding Sexual Identity – A Book for Gay and Lesbian Teens and Their Friends*. Lerner Publications Co.

For each chapter, a scenario has been written that sets up questions that may be asked by teen readers. Rench has put forth simple, factual and unbiased answers. This is easy to read and asks a lot of questions to which inquiring teenagers want to know the answers.

Audience: Grade 7 - Grade 12. Non-Fiction. ISBN 0-8225-0044-2.

Skutch, Robert. (1995). *Who's in a Family*. Berkeley, California: Tricycle Press.

This is a delightful book that explains to young children all different kinds of families. It includes single parents, being raised by the grandmother, gay couples, lesbian couples, divorced couples, and two parent families. It also tells children that in the animal kingdom there are many different kinds of family. The illustrations that accompany the text show the love that is felt in all of these families.

Audience: Kindergarten - Grade 3. Easy. ISBN 1-883672-66-X.

Sonnie, Amy. (2000). *Revolutionary Voices*. Los Angeles: Alyson Publications.

Amy Sonnie has gathered stories from youth across the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, the Middle East, Europe, Asia, the Pacific Islands, Africa, and the First Nations of North America. The youth range in ages from 14 to 26. The editing has been done by youth and includes poetry, interviews, essays, prose, letters and diary entries.

Audience: Grade 11 - Grade 12. Non-Fiction. ISBN 1-55583-558-9

Springer, Nancy. (1995). *Looking for Jamie Bridger*. Dial Books for Young Readers.

Jamie is a fourteen-year-old girl who is being raised by her grandparents. She is determined to find out who her parents are. Her search takes her as far as New York City where she meets Jamie Bridger! They have the same name, they look alike, and his parents are her grandparents. This is impossible, for Jamie moved to New York after being kicked out of his parents' home for being gay, and he now has a partner, David. That means my father is gay!

Audience: Grade 7 - Grade 8. Fiction. ISBN 0-8037-1773-3.

Vigna, Judith. (1995). *My Two Uncles*. Toronto: General Publishing, Ltd.

This is a beautiful story that leaves you hopeful someday soon Uncle Ned and Uncle Phil will be accepted into Grampy's family. Elly's grandparents are about to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. Elly, along with her two uncles, build a beautiful diorama as their gift to Gran and Grampy. Unfortunately, Grampy has not allowed Phil into his life these past five years, and Phil won't be invited to the party. Elly is bewildered by this exclusion. Her father

explains so lovingly to his daughter what it is to be gay and why some people are so uncomfortable with gay and lesbian couples.

Audience: Grade 2 - Grade 5. Easy. ISBN 0-8075-5507-X.

Wieler, Diana. (1989). *Bad Boy*. Toronto: Groundwood Books/Douglas and McIntyre Ltd.

A.J. is a sixteen-year-old boy who lives in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan and plays defense for the Cyclones Triple A hockey team. He is devastated to discover that his best friend, Tully, is together with another guy! A.J.'s emotions are raging through his body, and he takes them out on his opponents on the ice, making himself into the local Bad Boy. Diana Wieler sets us up for quite a surprise in the closing chapters of the book. This is a great setting for the story of a young gay male character.

Audience: Grade 8 - Grade 9. Fiction. Governor General's Literary Award Winner. ISBN 0-88899-083-9.

Willhoite, Michael. (1990). *Daddy's Roommate*. Los Angeles: Alyson Wonderland.

A young boy who lives with his mom, spends weekends with his dad and his partner, Frank. The young boy tells us what it is like living weekends in a gay home. Amazingly, his dad and Frank do the same things other couples do on the weekend. They read the paper, do chores, fight, tell jokes, make meals, go to the ball games, do yard work, go grocery shopping, and yes, sleep together. We learn that being gay is just one more kind of love, and we can be happy together.

Audience: Grade 1 - Grade 5. Easy. ISBN 1-55583-118-4.

Woodson, Jacqueline. (1995). *From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun*. Toronto: Scholastic Inc.

Melanin Sun is a fourteen-year-old boy who wishes his life could be different. He writes in his notebooks every secret. Melanin has felt "different" all of his life and he finds himself alone much of the time, so he spends a lot of time writing in his notebooks. His best friends, Sean and Raphael discover his deepest, darkest secret, that his mother is in love with a white woman! Jacqueline uses Melanin's notebooks to help him deal with his innermost feelings. The strained relationship between him and his mother gives the reader a realistic picture of dealing with this change in a young boy's life.

Audience: Grade 8 - Grade 9. Fiction. ISBN 0-590-45881-7.

Resources

Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit. Sask. Teachers' Federation:

Safe Schools: Breaking the Silence on Sexual Difference. (2002).

Safe Schools: Breaking the Silence on Sexual Difference Activities for Staff Development. (2002).

Stewart Resource Center. Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation:

Book Reviews by Les Parsons. (2001).

Gay and Lesbian Issues: A Bibliography. (2000).

In Other Words. (2001). Montreal, QC: National Film Board of Canada.

One of Them. (2000). Montreal, QC: National Film Board of Canada.

Out: Stories of Lesbian and Gay Youth. (1995). Montreal, QC: National Film Board of Canada.

School's Out. (1997). Montreal, QC: National Film Board of Canada.

Websites for Resource Lists:

<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists/poppaperOO.html>

YALSA Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults American Library Association.

<http://www.armory.com/~web/gaybooks.html>

Gay and Lesbian characters and themes in children's books.

<http://calvin.usc.edu/~trimmer/evaluating.html>

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table of the American Library Association.

<http://www.dezines.com/rainbow>

The Rainbow Classroom Network of Toronto, Ontario

<http://library.usask.ca/education/gay.html>

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